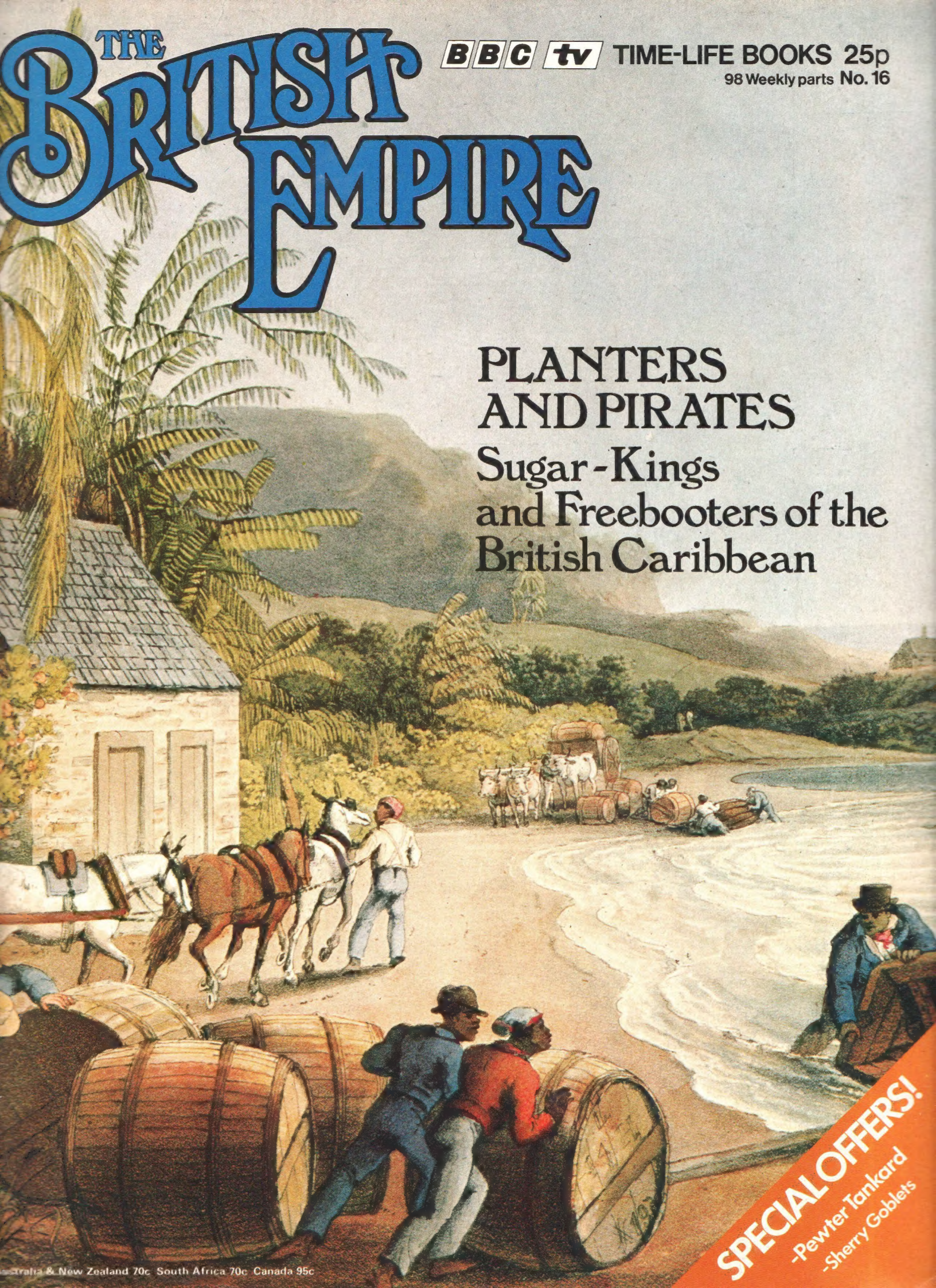
THE BRITISH EMPIRE

BBC tv TIME-LIFE BOOKS 25p
98 Weekly parts No. 16

PLANTERS AND PIRATES

Sugar-Kings and Freebooters of the British Caribbean



SPECIAL OFFERS!
-Pewter Tankard
-Sherry Goblets

...stralia & New Zealand 70c South Africa 70c Canada 95c

THE BRITISH EMPIRE

BBC tv TIME-LIFE BOOKS 25p
98 Weekly parts No. 16

Editor Harold C. Field
Deputy Editor John Man
Picture Editor Jean I. Tennant
Design Consultant Louis Klein
Staff Writers Stephen Webbe, Simon Rigge, Hilary Macaskill
Picture Researchers Marian Berman, Pamela Marke
Art Director Robert Hook
Assistant Art Director Graham Davis
Art Assistant Bridget Allan
Editorial Assistant Anne Morgan
Staff Photographer Eileen Tweedy
Partwork Director Kurt Medina
Sales Director George Gillespie
Consultants D. K. Fieldhouse, Lecturer in Commonwealth History and Fellow of Nuffield College, Oxford
A. F. Madden, Reader in Commonwealth Government and Fellow of Nuffield College, Oxford

OLIVER WARNER is a direct descendant of Sir Thomas Warner, the pioneer English settler of St. Kitts in the West Indies. He is a noted naval historian, and has written biographies of Nelson, Collingwood and Lord Cunningham, First Sea Lord during the Second World War. He has also written the life of Marshal Mannerheim of Finland, and is at present engaged on an account of Wolfe's conquest of Canada.

Subscriptions – These are available at £6·50 for six months, inclusive of postage and packing. For addresses outside of the United Kingdom, the rate is £8·75, inclusive of surface postage and packing.
Back Numbers – These are available at your local newsagent or may be secured by post for the inclusive price of 25p per issue. Be sure and specify which issue(s) you desire.
Orders for both subscriptions and back numbers should be sent, with remittance, to *The British Empire*, BBC Publications, 35 Marylebone High St., London W1M 4AA.
Binders – These may be ordered at £1·05 for the Standard edition and £1·75 for the Deluxe edition, either individually or on subscription. Orders, with remittance, should be sent to *British Empire Binders*, BBC Publications, P.O. Box No. 126, London SE1 5JZ.
NOTE: All above payments should be by crossed cheque/P.O.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: (*t*=top; *b*=bottom; *l*=left; *r*=right). Cover: Trustees of the British Museum. Back cover: National Maritime Museum, London. Trustees of the British Museum 422/423, 424/425, 433*t*, 433*b*, 437, 438–445; By permission of the Trustees of the British Museum (Natural History) 427; Mary Evans Picture Library 431*bl*; National Maritime Museum, London 428, 435*b*, 436, 447, 448; National Portrait Gallery, London 429; Public Record Office (Ref. SP9/205/1/10), Crown copyright 432*b*; Radio Times Hulton Picture Library 426, 430/431 except 431*bl*, 432/433*t*; By courtesy of Victoria and Albert Museum 446; West India Committee, London 435*t*. PHOTOGRAPHERS: Peter Davey cover, 438–445; R.B. Fleming & Co. Ltd. 424/425; Eileen Tweedy 427, 433*b*, 435, 436, 446/447, 448.

© 1972. Time-Life International (Nederland) N.V.

Reproduction in whole or in part without written permission is prohibited.

Published by Time-Life/BBC.

Printed in England by Jarrold and Sons Ltd. Norwich.

Issue No. 17. Revolt Against Slavery.
Anti-slavery campaigners – both negro rebels and British humanitarians – fought for 60 years to free slaves throughout the Empire.

Issue No. 18. The Struggle for the Cape.
Britain's take-over in South Africa drove the independent Boers inland, where they clashed bloodily with the militant Zulus.

CONTENTS

421. Planters and Pirates
The arrival of the British in the West Indies, their struggles against the Spanish, the "white slavery" of indentured labour and Cromwell's disastrous Caribbean campaign against the Spanish.

430. Picture Essay: Under the Jolly Roger
Some of the pirates and privateers whose bloodthirsty ventures made them legends in their own lifetime.

434. "King Sugar" and the Sugar Kings
The men whose vast slave-based sugar estates made them among the richest and most influential men in Britain.

438. Picture Essay: Slaves, Sugar, Rum: A Recipe for Wealth
The backbreaking work of the slaves on a sugar plantation as they plant sugar-cane, harvest it and produce sugar and rum.

446. The Decline and Fall
The end of slavery and stiff competition from sugar-growers elsewhere turns many West Indian islands into backwaters.

Cover: Negro slaves on Antigua in the 1820s roll barrels of sugar and rum into boats ready for export to England.

TANKARD TOKEN
Save this with tokens from issues 15, 17 and 18 for this offer.
Save this with tokens from issues 13, 14 and 15 for this offer.
GOBLETS TOKEN

These tokens are valuable see inside back cover.

PLANTERS AND PIRATES

When the British first arrived in the West Indies in the early 17th Century, the necklace of lush tropical islands strung between Florida and South America was still largely the preserve of cannibals. But within 20 years, one precious crop – sugar – revolutionized the islands, transforming them into treasure houses for any European country that could seize them and plant them with cane.

From then on, the history of the West Indies became a tangle of overlapping themes. European nations – principally Britain, France and Spain – snatched islands from each other at bewildering speed as pawns in their struggle for world empire. Against this confused background, British sugar planters, using millions of negro slaves, coined vast fortunes – which they used to buy positions of power at home. Off shore, pirates and privateers preyed on the valuable shipping which scuttled nervously between the islands. Only in the 19th Century, after two centuries of turbulence, did the end of slavery and the decline of the sugar trade bring lasting peace to the area.

Union Jacks and cannon on 17th-Century Nevis (above) warned French and Spanish captains that the British were in firm possession of the island. They had arrived in 1628 from St. Christopher (below), the mother colony of the British West Indies.

By Oliver Warner

On January 28, 1624, Sir Thomas Warner landed with his wife, young son and 14 others on St. Christopher in the West Indies. Warner had attempted to make his fortune in what Walter Raleigh once described as the "Large, Rich and Beautiful Empire of Guiana." But as with Raleigh, disappointment awaited him in the jungles of South America and a visit to St. Christopher convinced him that the island was a more pleasing alternative: creaming surf broke on golden beaches, exotic birds flitted through the lush vegetation and shoals of fish flashed through crystalline waters.

Warner thus became the first to challenge the Spanish claim to the Caribbean, a claim based on the 1494 Treaty of Tordesillas which divided the New World between Spain and Portugal.

The Spaniards, however, were not on the spot to dispute possession. The native Caribs were. These fierce and bloodthirsty warriors, whose long canoes could often be seen speeding from island to island, were already notorious for the skill with which they used their bows and poisoned arrows. Writing of the effect of a Carib arrow, the 16th-Century historian Richard Hakluyt observed "The partie shotte indureth the most insufferable torment in the world, and abideth a most ugly and lamentable death, sometimes dying starke mad."

The Caribs also ate the bodies of foes they killed in battle. Indeed, the Spaniards, who had been in the area for over a century, did not distinguish linguistically between "cannibal" and "Carib." In 1564 the Caribs of Dominica had killed and eaten the entire crew of a Spanish ship wrecked on the island, and for this and other murderous acts the Spaniards began to exterminate the "bloody and inhuman man-eaters" wherever they could find them.

But on St. Christopher – or St. Kitts as the English called it – Warner, a bluff Suffolk squire who had once served in James I's personal bodyguard, found the natives surprisingly friendly. Indeed, Tegramond, the local chief, was so amicable that Warner decided to stay.

Warner's tiny band quickly set to work building one-room long huts thatched with palm leaves and preparing ground for maize and tobacco.

Practical and determined men, they worked with a will, and by March, 1625, when the ship *Hopewell* arrived from Virginia, they had a consignment of 7,000 pounds of tobacco – the major West Indian crop before the coming of sugar – to send home in her. Warner himself returned to whip up more recruits, and to seek the protection of the Crown for what he hoped would be a thriving new colony.

He was soon successful on both counts. Suitable men came forward and on September 13, 1625, Charles I, the new young King, issued Warner with the first Letters Patent ever granted in respect of a West Indian island. It gave Warner the authority he wanted, not only in St. Kitts but in neighbouring Nevis, Montserrat and Barbados, where opportunities seemed equally good.

But English and Caribs had not long shared possession of St. Kitts before they were joined by a handful of shipwrecked Frenchmen. They were made welcome by the Caribs and by Warner, who saw them as potential allies against the Spanish.

The early harmony between Europeans and natives in St. Kitts, however, was not to last. The Caribs, incited by their "boyos" or witch-doctors, turned hostile. In 1626 a plot to exterminate the settlers was betrayed to Warner and the French by Barbe, a Carib woman who had a white lover. The settlers struck first. One night they surprised and killed most of the local natives including Chief Tegramond and then made preparations to ward off invasion by tribes from neighbouring islands. Although the Caribs had a great advantage in numbers, primitive blow-guns and bows and arrows were no match for the settlers' disciplined use of fire-arms. The natives were driven away with immense slaughter, but about a hundred settlers met ghastly deaths from poisoned arrows in the process.

Three years after the destruction of Carib power in St. Kitts, Warner returned home to be knighted. He died in 1649 and St. Kitts remained in joint, uneasy possession of France and England until 1713 when the British were given complete possession by the Treaty of Utrecht.

Although St. Kitts was the first English settlement in the Caribbean, a more important acquisition – and one destined never to be disturbed by invaders from another European country – was Barbados. The most easterly of all West Indian islands, Barbados is slightly larger than the Isle of Wight, almost encircled by coral reefs and for the most part very flat. Claimed by England in 1605, the island was not settled until 1627 when an expedition backed by Sir William Courteen landed there.

Courteen, the son of a London cloth-dealer, had been overseas manager for his father's Anglo-Dutch firm and by the 1620s owned a fleet of merchantmen trading with Guinea, Spain and the Spanish West Indies, including Cuba. Courteen was a wealthy man and lent large sums of money to the habitually impecunious James I and his son, Charles I, for which he was never repaid. In recompense certain rights in Barbados were granted him and by 1628 he had sent some 1,600 settlers to the island each hoping to make their fortune by cultivating small estates of tobacco, cotton, indigo or dye-wood with indentured labour from England.

But although Courteen was never troubled by foreign encroachments, English invaders were another matter: it turned out that the Stuart kings had no qualms about giving the same gift over and over again, for in 1627 the Earl of Carlisle, a courtier and royal favourite, was granted semi-feudal rights, as "Lord Proprietor of the Caribees," in all the inhabited West Indies. Though the Earl never visited his domains, his agents forcibly ejected the Courteen group.

Within a decade Carlisle had on his hands a veritable treasure-trove, for in the 1630s Dutch settlers on other islands introduced sugar from Brazil, and altered the whole West Indian economy.

In Barbados sugar was introduced in 1640, and its arrival meant the beginning of the end for the small-scale planters. Unlike tobacco, which could be profitably cultivated by small-holders on 50 acres, sugar required much more capital, estates of over 500 acres, skilled management, complicated milling machinery – and an ample supply of labour, soon to be supplied by negro slaves from Africa. The small planters could afford neither the investment in machinery nor the price of

land, driven up as the vision of sugar-based wealth attracted the rich.

As Barbados, Antigua, St. Kitts, Nevis and Montserrat sprouted sugar-cane and began to flourish it was the merchant, the shipowner and the rich planter who reaped most benefit. The less affluent men either disappeared or remained as managers and wage-earners. Some took to buccaneering, a term originally applying to piratical hunters that derived from the *boucan*, the primitive wooden grid-iron which the early French settlers copied from the Caribs as a way of cooking their meat. The early buccaneers often made a handsome living plundering from the French and Spanish. Some lived rough, hunting the wild cattle, clad like sailors in woollen shirts and canvas trousers, and shod with raw-hide. The most industrious cut log-wood – illegally – on the Spanish-occupied coast of Honduras, while a few searched for uninhabited islands, failing which they fought indigenous Caribs for possession of attractive lands.

Soon there arrived white servants of a different kind: the transportees – "loose, vagrant people," in the words of Sir Josiah Child, a powerful City merchant, "vicious and destitute of means to live at home being either unfit for labour, or such as . . . had so misbehaved themselves by whoring, thieving or other debauchery that none would set them on work." To relieve the pressure on British gaols, riff-raff, prisoners and debtors were shipped off, 100 or so a year, to what was almost white slavery on the large plantations, where they worked side by side with the negroes. The chief difference between white and black was that in most cases the white man's term of servitude was set by the authority who transported him. The negro was a slave for life.

After Cromwell's victory in the Civil War in 1649, criminals and dissidents were also sentenced to transportation in the West Indies. So many were sent to Barbados during the rule of the Lord Protector that the expression "to barbados," – meaning to consign to oblivion

By the mid 18th Century, as this map shows, most of the Caribbean islands were divided among the European powers. Spain's possessions are shown in green, Britain's in red and France's in yellow. Two of the Virgin Isles were Danish and three Antilles Dutch.

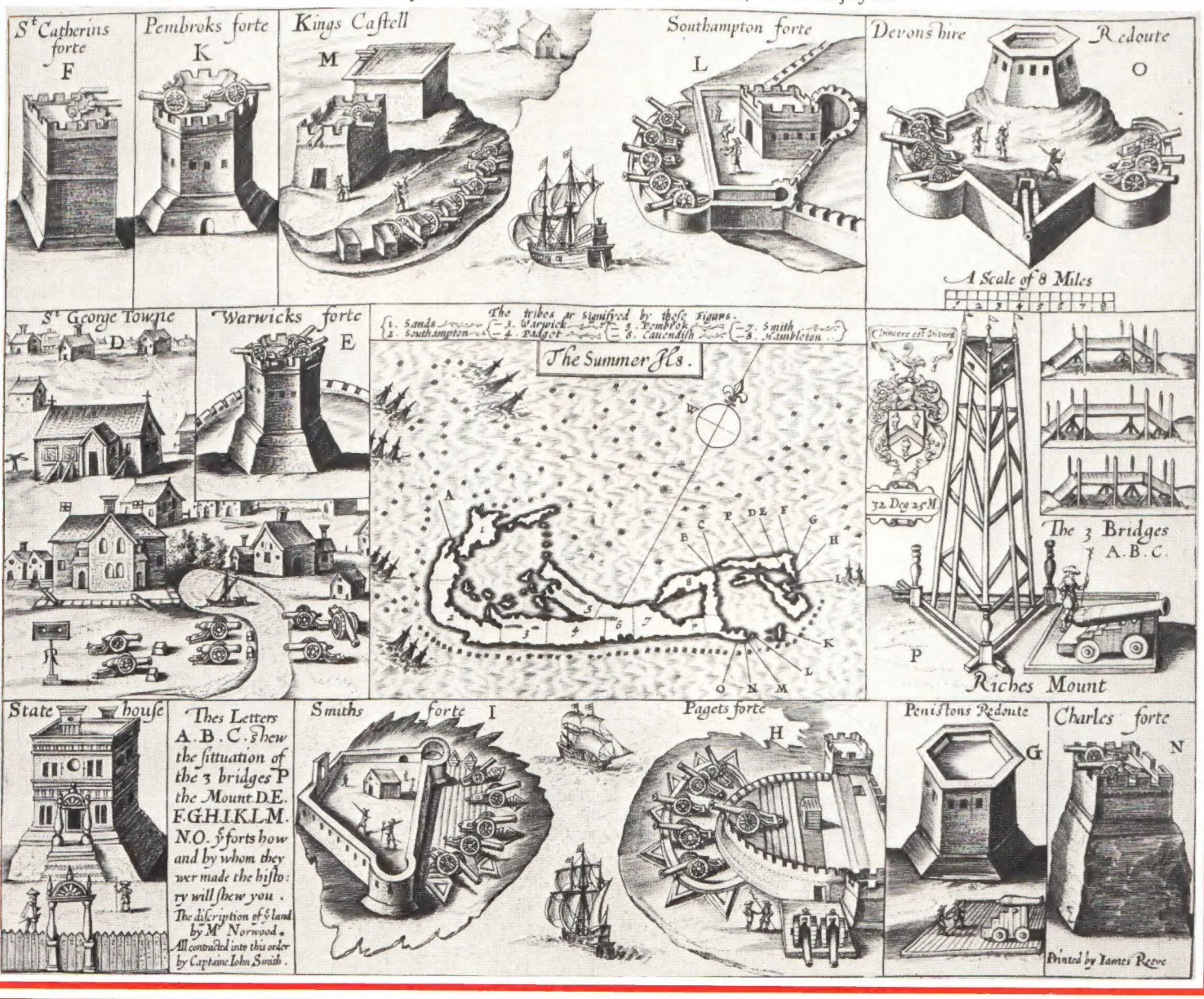
The Impregnable Fortress of Bermuda

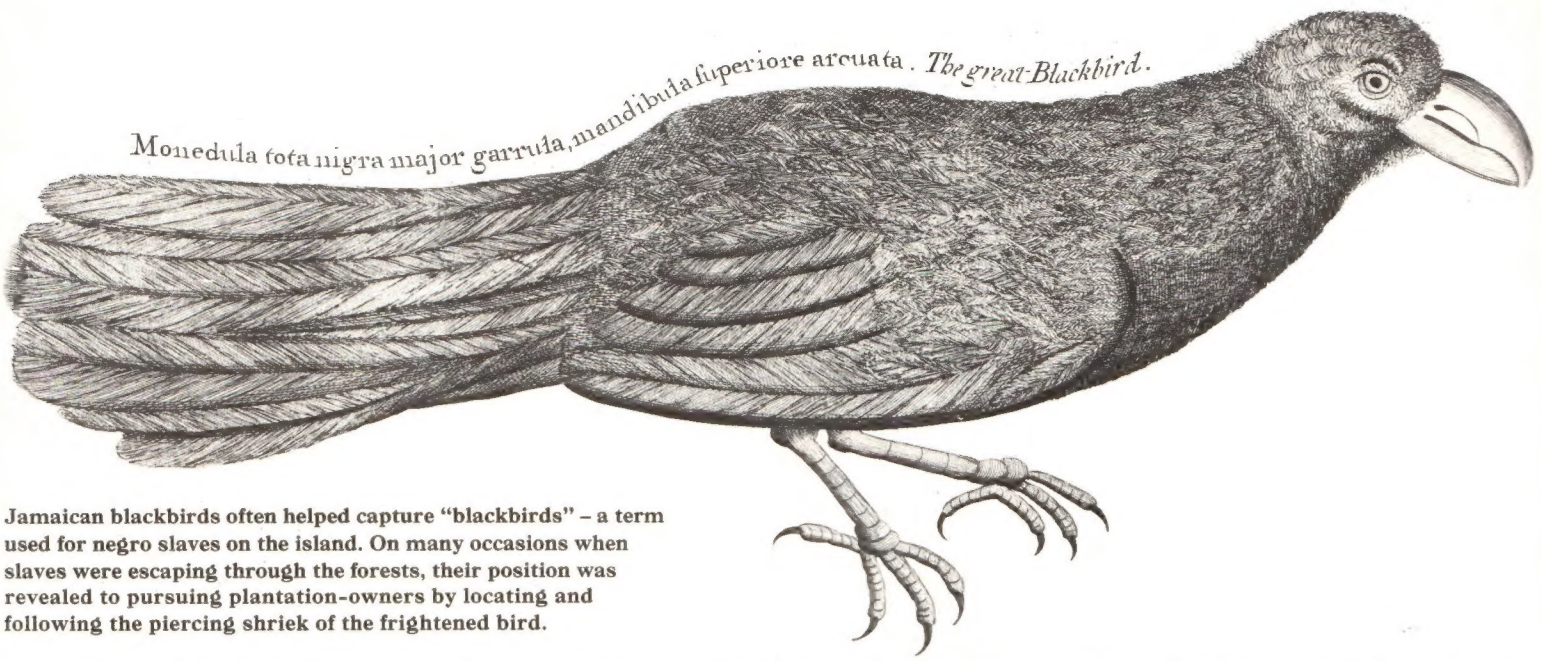
From the dawn of history Bermuda lay undiscovered and unpopulated, some 600 miles from the American coast, "in th' ocean's bosom unespied," in the words of the English poet Andrew Marvell. Over the millennia, the western Atlantic so pounded Bermuda's limestone shores that by the time the Spaniard Juan Bermudez stumbled on the islands in 1503 – and gave his name to the discovery – Bermuda had been moulded into a fish-hook shape and fragmented into 300 pieces. The first Englishman to land on the islands was Sir George Summers who floundered ashore from his sinking vessel *Sea Venture* in 1609. He called the group the Summer Isles – a name which gradually fell into disuse – and his shipwreck provided Shakespeare with a stirring opening to his poetic drama, *The Tempest*.

Sixty colonists followed in 1612 and were pleasantly surprised by what they found. "The air is most commonly cleere, very temperate, moist with a moderate heat," remarked Captain John Smith, the famous Governor of Jamestown, Virginia, who found the islands "apt for the generation and nourishing of all things. No cold there is beyond an English Aprille, nor heat much greater than an ordinary July in France, so that frost and snow is never seen here, nor stinking and infectious mists very seldom."

The early settlers had little chance to enjoy a life of indolence and luxury. Richard More, Bermuda's first Governor, whose skill as a military engineer is commemorated in the 1624 map and drawings below, was acutely conscious of the colony's vulnerability to attack. He promptly set everybody to work building forts and redoubts at key points round the islands. He even raised two cannon from the sunken *Sea Venture* to supplement those that soon frowned through the islands' crenellated battlements. To warn the forts of an approaching enemy, a tall wooden observation-tower (P, below) was built and a look-out posted on top. If he spotted a suspicous sail, the alarm was sounded by firing a near-by cannon. As the report rang out over the islands, men dropped whatever they were doing, snatched up halberds and matchlocks and raced for their batteries. Trestle-bridges (A, B, C, below) between the main islands enabled the defenders to rush their forces anywhere they were needed to repel an enemy landing.

But the colony's intricate defence system was never put to the test. Dutch, French and Spanish found its bristling defences altogether too daunting and as the years passed Bermuda enjoyed a peace that the war-torn West Indies, far to the south, never enjoyed.





Jamaican blackbirds often helped capture "blackbirds" – a term used for negro slaves on the island. On many occasions when slaves were escaping through the forests, their position was revealed to pursuing plantation-owners by locating and following the piercing shriek of the frightened bird.

– entered the language. The vagabonds and delinquents employed on the island were even joined by 7,000 Scotsmen taken prisoner after the Battle of Worcester in 1651.

A piteous petition to Parliament in 1659 described how these unfortunates in Barbados spent their time: "grinding at the mills and attending the furnaces, or digging in this scorching island; having nothing to feed on (notwithstanding their hard labour) but potato roots, nor to drink, but water with such roots washed in it, besides the bread and tears of their own afflictions; being bought and sold still from one planter to another, or attached as horses and beasts for the debts of their masters, being whipt at the whipping post (as rogues), for their masters' pleasure, and sleeping in sties worse than hogs in England."

Not unnaturally, many indentured servants did their best to stow away on vessels leaving the island. In 1672, the Governor of the parish of St. Thomas in Jamaica forbade any person to leave the island without his permission, fined anyone helping a servant to escape and ordered any runaway to be punished by the extension of his indenture term, "and if it is his custom to run away, his master may put him in irons until he is broken of his bad habits."

By the second half of the 17th Century, when indentured servants no longer had the promise of land at the end of their service, servants were paid off with 300 pounds of sugar, worth less than £2. Barbados soon swarmed with hundreds of destitute servants whose terms had expired and who "were domineered over and used like dogs."

By the end of the 17th Century the system of white labour had collapsed, but echoes of the sad reality of transportation echoed down the years. Almost a century later, early in George II's reign, John Gay's enchanting *Beggar's Opera* was produced in London, its characters highwaymen, and their sweethearts pickpockets and turn-keys. The heroine, Polly Peachum, in one of her duets with the hero Macheath, sings:

Were I sold on Indian soil,
Soon as the burning day was closed
I could mock the sultry toil
When on my charmer's breast reposed.

No one would have thought that the allusion, as we might suppose today, was to the Far East. It was to the cane-fields of the Caribbean.

When Cromwell seized power in 1649, he did more than increase the flow of white workers to the West Indies: he involved England in a Caribbean military disaster. Cromwell's outlook was Elizabethan. He longed to continue the process of increasing the New World, a task which, in his view, the Stuarts had shamefully neglected. He saw no reason why Puritan England and Protestant Holland should not divide the world between them, as once the Catholic Spaniards and Portuguese had done. Brazil and the Far East should be the Dutch portion; America and the Caribbean should be England's. It was a visionary concept. The Dutch were not impressed; and the proud Spaniards sneered at the notion of any concessions to England.

Cromwell was not deterred. But, as he planned an assault on Spanish Hispaniola in 1655, he made the mistake of underestimating his opponents, believing that the Spanish American system was so rotten that it would fall at a touch.

An element of tragi-comedy overshadowed Cromwell's "Western Design," which developed into a model of how not to conduct a combined naval and military operation. The admiral chosen was William Penn, father of the founder of Pennsylvania. He was an experienced man of 33 who would have done well enough had he been better equipped, and had a sounder choice of general been made. Robert Venables, the military commander, was nearly ten years older than Penn, but not half so able. Since Cromwell felt that, with England still restless, he could not spare first-rate troops, Venables was given a rabble of a force. It consisted of about 2,500 drafted men of whom the majority were "common cheats, thieves, cutpurses, and such like lewd persons," as one of the few professional soldiers in the force remarked.

Among other mistakes, Venables had added nearly 5,000 Barbadians to his force. Totally without training or discipline, they proved to be utterly useless in battle, and the first attack made on Hispaniola was driven off with heavy loss.

After this fiasco, the joint commanders decided to invade Jamaica – only weakly held by the Spanish – rather than to return ignominiously home.

On May 10, 1655, the British forces sailed into the harbour of present-day Kingston. Though seriously handicapped by the fact that their storeships had parted company with the fleet, and that their soldiers had no tents and little food, they quickly achieved their objectives and the Spanish Governor surrendered – a victory in which Venables had played little part. Instead of leading his troops into the attack he paced about his ship "wrapped up in a cloak, with his hat over his eyes, looking as if he had been a-studying of physics more than like a general of an army," as an officer put it.

Soon after the somewhat hollow victory the grimmer realities of tropical campaigning became most evident. The troops fell prey to yellow fever, malaria and dysentery. As rations ran short, the troops had to shoot wild cattle. When the cattle fled into the impenetrable interior of the island, the men fell back on horses, asses and dogs. Drinking also took its toll. A Spaniard, asked to comment on why English losses were so high remarked, according to an English historian, that he had "wondered much at the sickness of our people, until he knew the strength of their drinks, but then wondered more that they were not all dead." Certainly it was a fact that out of about 7,000 men who had landed in Jamaica during May, little more than half were alive six months later.

When Penn and Venables got back to England, Cromwell acted much as Queen Elizabeth might have done: he sent them both to the Tower for a time for failing to carry out their instructions. He felt angry and humiliated, as well as being deceived as to Spanish strength. But Penn survived to do useful service to his country at sea after the restoration of the monarchy. Venables was cashiered, which was probably a just fate, though he lived to write a pleasant little treatise on angling, his favourite pursuit. One single act of sense remained to his credit. He left behind him in Jamaica the ablest of his lieutenant-colonels, Edward Doyley, who, in a series of protracted and often difficult forays, stamped out the remnants of Spanish resistance, and repelled all attempts at reconquest. In the next ten years, Jamaica was more fully settled from other West Indian islands, particularly Nevis, and England emerged as the area's second most powerful nation.

Jamaica was perhaps best known, however, as the island of the buccaneers or, as they were more respectably known, privateers. These ferocious men came chiefly from France and England and since Spain did not recognize the claims of either power in the area until 1670, local governors issued them with Letters of Marque authorizing acts of war against the Spanish – indeed, against any of the Sovereign's enemies. The most notorious of these privateers was Sir Henry Morgan, who was active in the time of Charles II, and William Dampier, a younger more intelligent man, whose frank confession of swashbuckling piracies helped to make his book *A New Voyage Round the World* a best-seller when it appeared in 1697.

It was Morgan, however, who came to represent the archetypal buccaneer. Of humble and obscure Welsh origins, he is said to have been kidnapped when a boy, and "sold" to a merchant who shipped him to Barbados as an indentured servant to a planter. The life did not appeal to him, so he escaped to Tortuga, a small island with an inaccessible northern coast and an easily defensible harbour in the south. It lay near Hispaniola which had become the principal base of the French buccaneers.

The French government actually sent out an official Governor to Tortuga. He annexed part of Hispaniola, where he helped to plant 2,000 French settlers, whom the Spaniards were too weak to dislodge. French and English were soon rivals in despoiling the Spanish Main.

Morgan, who learned his buccaneering skills from the French, found that the "Brethren of the Coast," as they liked to call themselves, were some of the fiercest men who sailed the seas. One Frenchman who saw a boatload of buccaneers returning from a cattle-raiding expedition said they looked like "the butcher's vilest servants, who have been eight days in the slaughterhouse without washing themselves." They had, however, a certain sense of justice among themselves. For instance, there were rules for the distribution of booty, and compensations for injury. The loss of a right arm was held to be worth 600 Spanish dollars, a left arm, or a leg, 500. Blindness could, theoretically, yield a buccaneer 1,000 dollars, and occasionally this sum was actually paid.

For some time Morgan based himself on Tortuga: then he moved over to Port Royal in Jamaica, which became his base. He was a natural leader, and his exploits against the Spaniards rivalled in daring – and cruelty – those of Drake in the previous century. Even among his fellow ruffians he had a reputation for unrivalled ferocity and he habitually tortured captives to make them reveal the whereabouts of hidden treasure. He found fire applied to arms and legs was one of the quickest methods of getting results. An Englishman who sailed with Morgan remarked:

"It is a common thing among the privateers, besides burning with matches and such-like slight torments, to cut a man to pieces, first some flesh, then a hand, an arm, a leg, sometimes tying a cord about his head and with a stick twisting it till his eyes shoot out."

Admiral "Old Grog" Vernon, so called after his grogram breeches, diluted his men's rum to minimize drunkenness. This "grog" ration, which thereafter became a naval tradition, perpetuated his nickname.

In 1670 Spain recognized British claims in the West Indies by the Treaty of Madrid. Although Sir Thomas Modyford, the Governor of Jamaica, knew about the settlement, Morgan was supposedly in ignorance of it and just when Spain was hoping for an easier time in the Caribbean he took Panama in a daring raid. The attack was followed by weeks of pillage, during the course of which Morgan amassed loot worth at least £10,000.

Morgan and Modyford – suspected of collusion – were summoned to England for an explanation. There, Morgan was not only acquitted but found himself a popular hero. People were glad to listen to the accounts of a man who, it seemed, could rival the feats of the Elizabethans. He was actually knighted by Charles II, and was sent back to Jamaica as Lieutenant-Governor of the island. Modyford, a less persuasive talker, had harsher treatment, and spent some time in the Tower of London.

Until his death in 1688 Morgan lived in splendour on his spoils but his habitual drunkenness and towering rages alienated all who came in contact with him and in 1683 he was stripped of all public offices. Morgan's legend is still pervasive in Jamaica. There is also a sad little rhyme about him:

You was a great one, Morgan,
You was a King uncrowned
When you was under canvas
– But now you're underground!

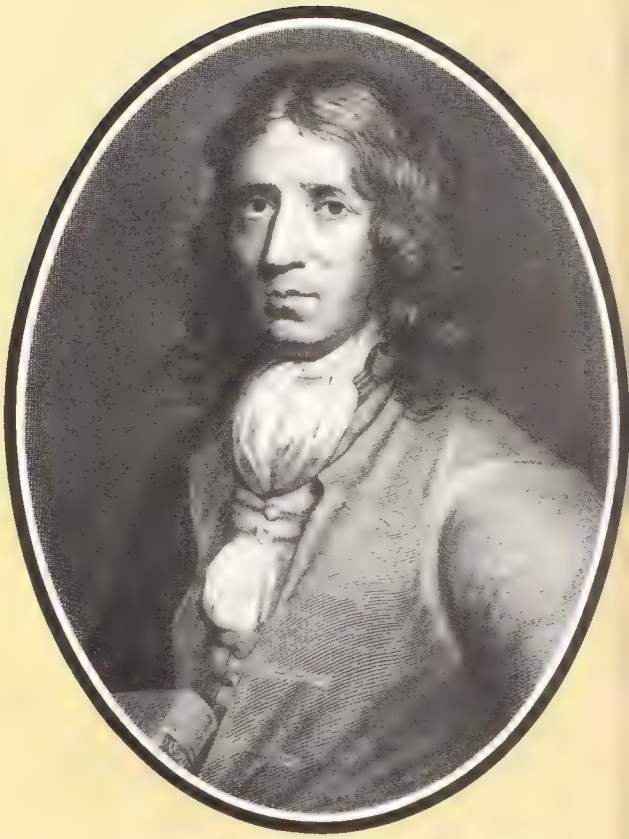
Buccaneering continued after Morgan's time, but no longer with any sort of official sanction, since there was a nominal peace with Spain. When the first regular naval squadron arrived at Port Royal in 1685 it was the end of organized freebooting, though sporadic attacks on Spanish towns and shipping continued for a number of years.

Although Port Royal was virtually destroyed in an earthquake in 1692, Jamaica's economic life was not seriously interrupted as a new capital was speedily built at near-by Kingston. Despite the earthquake and later fires and hurricanes Port Royal survived as a naval station and in the 18th Century the Royal Navy's time-honoured institution of "grog" was born at its quays. The word itself commemorates Admiral Vernon, known to his sailors as "Old Grog" from the material of which his breeches were made, a coarse-grained cloth called grogram. Vernon issued an order from his flagship *Burford* on August 21, 1740: because of "the pernicious custom of the Seamen drinking their Allowance of Rum in drams, and often at once, which is attended by many Fatal Effects to their Morale as well as to their Health," the stupefying daily allowance of half a pint per man was to be mixed with a quart of water. This was to be done in a "Butt kept for the purpose and on deck, in the presence of the Lieutenant of the Watch." The distribution took place twice a day, and the custom survived in the Royal Navy until 1970.

The focus of such privateering as continued shifted north to the Bahamas, where it soon became undisguised piracy. Woodes Rogers, Governor of the islands, did much to suppress it but was not completely successful. Curiously enough Rogers was himself a former privateer. Between 1708 and 1711 he made a lucrative privateering voyage round the world with Dampier and during the course of it he rescued Alexander Selkirk, the prototype of Defoe's Robinson Crusoe from the bleak island of Juan Fernandez. During his second term as Governor Rogers was more successful. He restored commerce to the islands and he succeeded in almost totally eradicating piracy ☠

Woodes Rogers, Governor of the Bahamas, sits sedately examining a map of New Providence, the island seat of his authority. Rogers won fame with a privateering voyage round the world in 1708, but ten years later he was appointed Governor and began to root out piracy from the islands.

The Jolly Roger, the piratical flag that struck terror into seamen from Boston to Barbados, may have been named after a red battle pennant that French buccaneers called the "Jolie Rougère" or "pretty red one."



William Dampier spent his early years as a privateer but later won respectability when, on a voyage for the Admiralty, he became the first Englishman to set foot in Australia.

UNDER THE JOLLY ROGER

Throughout the 17th and 18th Centuries the Jolly Roger's skull and crossbones cast a dark shadow across the Caribbean. Ruthless freebooters, like Edward Teach ("Blackbeard"), Bartholomew Roberts and the horrific woman pirate Anne Bonney, cowed the entire region and nearly drove shipping from the seas. British vessels had much less to fear from privateers like Henry Morgan, Captain Kidd and William Dampier, who with official sanction confined their attacks to the enemies of the Crown. But whoever they killed or looted in their fierce attacks, pirates and privateers alike lived for rum, gold and easy women – and often died in their pursuit.

When Captain Henry Morgan attacked Porto Bello, Panama in 1668, he forced captured Spanish priests and nuns to lead the assault, bearing scaling-ladders through a hail of bullets from their own countrymen.

Captain Kidd was not, as this 19th-Century print suggests, a romantic hero but an unstable man whose inept privateering smacked so much of piracy that he was hanged.

Bartholomew Roberts inspired such dread that batteries of guns were set up on the Virginian coast to keep him out of America.

Anne Bonney's language was as foul and her sword-play as deadly as any other pirate, but when she was brought to trial in Jamaica in 1720 she managed to escape the death penalty because she was found to be pregnant.

Captain Edward Teach, or "Blackbeard," used to stick lighted matches in his hair to enhance his fearsome appearance.

From Panama with pieces of eight

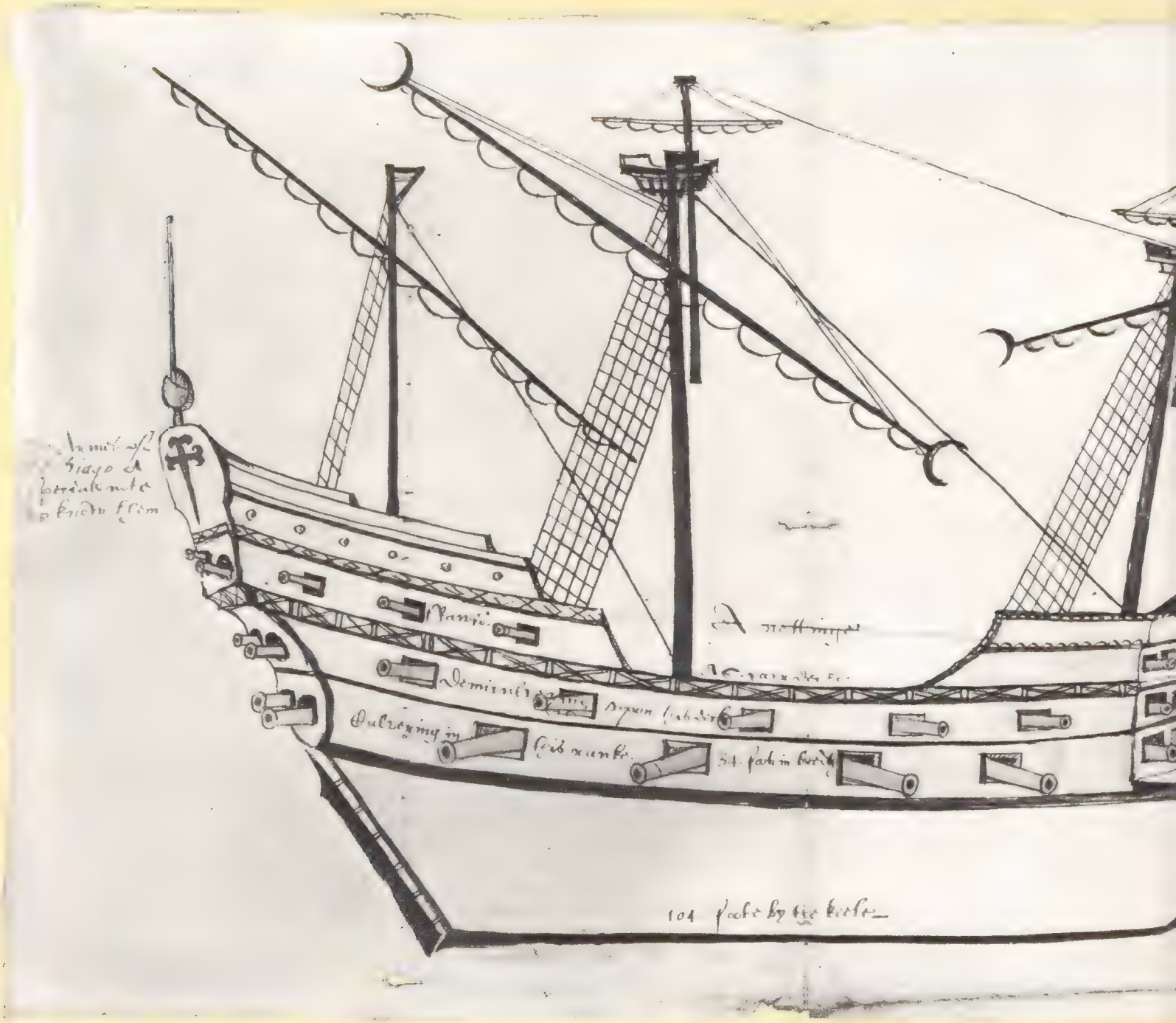
One of the most daring ventures ever mounted by Caribbean privateers was Henry Morgan's raid on the Spanish treasure-house of Panama. Its strong-rooms were stuffed with Peruvian gold and silver ready for dispatch to Spain.

Morgan had eyed the town enviously for years and in 1671 he led 1,200 men through steaming jungles to this El Dorado on the Pacific. But to his dismay he found facing him two squadrons of cavalry, four regiments of foot – and a solid barrier of snorting bulls. Morgan's men fired a volley and stampeded the beasts, who turned tail in a frenzy of fear and shattered the Spanish lines.

The privateers soon seized the town and ferreted out its precious metals. Exhilarated by their success, the entire band got wildly drunk and inadvertently set fire to the town before departing with 400,000 pieces of eight. Morgan was later knighted for his services against the King's enemies and appointed Lieutenant-Governor of Jamaica.

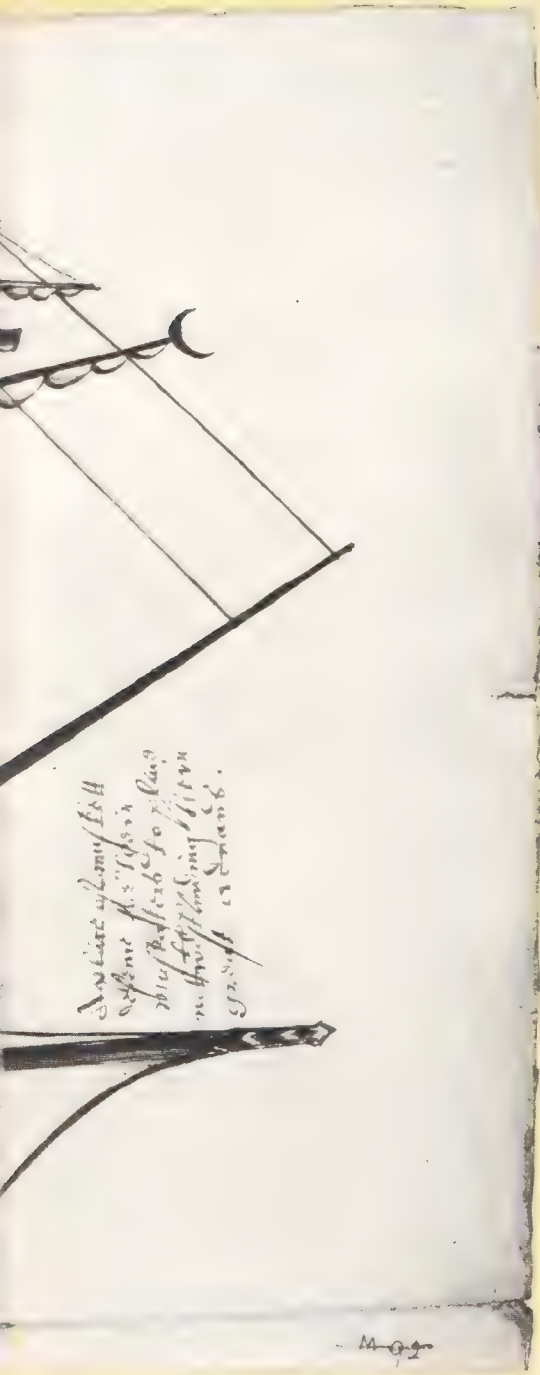
Few privateers were similarly rewarded. When brief periods of peace descended on the West Indies, many of them turned to piracy and met a grim fate on the gallows. But not until the late 18th Century did such draconian measures succeed in ridding the Caribbean of pirates.

Captain Morgan and his men tussle with Spaniard captured the town, fire broke out in its narrow



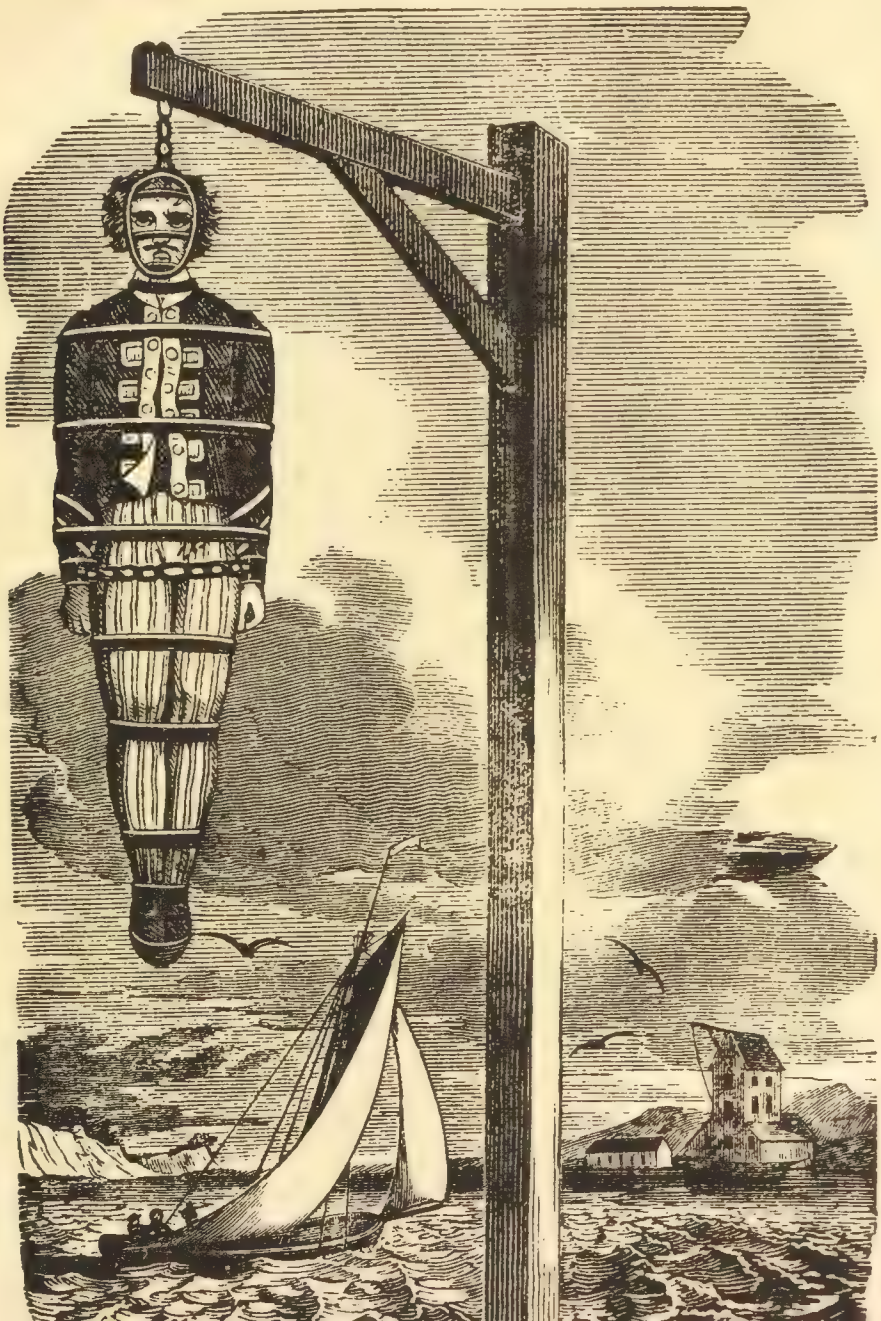
Spanish treasure-ships, like this one drawn by an English spy, were custom built to carry bullion, heavily gunned and "excellent of sayle."

on the outskirts of Panama. After Morgan
streets and every building was destroyed.



Spanish towns were set alight all over the Caribbean and South America by roving bands of
English pirates who tortured, raped and killed before they hurled blazing torches at the buildings.

After execution the bodies of pirates were hanged in irons at waterfronts to deter seamen from pir



II. "King Sugar" and the Sugar Kings

Whenever peace prevailed in the 18th Century, Caribbean settlers enjoyed a Golden Age, the richer building enormous wealth on the basis of "King Sugar" and slavery.

The negro slave-trade in the 18th Century constituted one of the greatest migrations – and the greatest atrocities – in recorded history. In Barbados in 1763 the slave population stood at 70,000; over the next eight years, 35,000 more were imported; yet the slave population rose to only 74,000 – in those eight years, 31,000 slaves died on the island.

Economically, this mortality could be borne because the profits from sugar were so vast: in the 18th Century Jamaica was Britain's most important colony. In the 1770s one-twelfth of Britain's annual imports, amounting to more than £1,000,000, came from Jamaica alone, and the British West Indies as a whole supplied a quarter of Britain's imports.

The richer settlers, known as the "Plantocracy," grew ever more powerful. The Crown allowed them a greater measure of self-government than obtained in the French and Spanish islands. But although they made vast fortunes and enjoyed wide powers in the West Indies planters loved to return to England. At home they were usually able to buy seats in the corrupt House of Commons, where they could represent the "West India Interest" to best advantage. In the later 18th Century there were always about 30 West Indian planters and merchants in the House, and some of them were very influential indeed. Writing to his son in 1767 Lord Chesterfield lamented that he had been unable to buy him a seat in Parliament for £2,500 because the jobber to whom he had offered the money had laughed at him and said that "there was no such thing as a Borough to be had now, for the rich East and West Indians had secured them all at the rate of £3,000 at least, but many at £4,000, and two or three he knew at £5,000."

The Plantocracy's wealth was indeed apt to be paraded ostentatiously like that of the "Nabobs," the traders who did well in India and returned to unload their fortunes and inflate prices. In *The West Indian*, a play popular in London in the 18th Century, a servant philosophizes: "He's very rich, and that's sufficient. They say he has rum and sugar enough belonging to him to make all the water in the Thames into punch!"

One of the more remarkable of the Plantocracy was William Beckford. His grandfather had settled in Jamaica during the previous century and prospered. His father did still better. He married into the Herring family, who were also Plantocrats, became Speaker of the Jamaica Assembly, and later Governor and Commander-in-Chief in the Colony. William Beckford himself came to England to learn how to market the family's produce, and did so well that he was twice Lord Mayor. He was a man of radical political views which had been encouraged by the unusual freedom with which members of colonial Assemblies were accustomed to express themselves. When he died in 1770 he had an income of £100,000 a year and £1,000,000 stashed away in Jamaica and England. Most of this wealth was dissipated by his eccentric son, another William, who built a fantastic neo-Gothic house, Fonthill Abbey, in Wiltshire where he wrote a novel about a megalomaniac Arabian Caliph.

About the same time that the Beckfords were establishing themselves in Jamaica, the Codringtons were doing the same thing in Barbados. One of them who attempted to breed slaves for his estates became Governor of the Leeward Islands, and he sent his son Christopher home to England to be educated. Christopher was a man of varied talents, a wit, a passionate book-collector, and a brave soldier. He had a short life, but he accomplished much in it. While still under 30 he was given his father's office as Governor of the Leeward Islands, and he returned to serve in and to die at Barbados. When his will was read it was found he had left his magnificent library, and £10,000, to All Souls' College, Oxford. Besides his gift to the university Codrington left a mansion and two sugar estates in Barbados to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel to found a mission college in the island.

Although the large proprietor lived in state in the West Indies, his life had certain inherent disadvantages. The islands, which like islands everywhere tended to generate a claustrophobic atmo-

Kingston: Boom and Bust

From its foundation in the late 17th Century, Kingston, the capital of Jamaica, grew fat on the profits of war. "By augmenting the consumption of merchandizes," wrote a shrewd observer in 1774, "war, so fatal to some states, has ever been the best friend of this town."

Kingston, which replaced earthquake-devastated Port Royal as capital in 1692, enjoyed an unassailable position. Its harbour was almost completely landlocked and cunningly positioned forts coupled with treacherous shoals made its approaches impassable to an enemy. While the interminable struggle with France and Spain depleted Britain's coffers, it brought untold wealth both to the town's merchants and to privateers who had no scruples about trading with the enemy one day and rifling his treasure-fleets the next. In fact Jamaica did so well out of violence that its motto was popularly supposed to be "Peace with England and war with all the rest of the world."

Whenever peace descended on the Caribbean, Kingston plunged into despondency. Profiteers packed their bags and privateers sailed away in search of fresh spoils, leaving the merchants with the mundane task of making an honest living. But to everyone's surprise, when lasting peace came in the early 19th Century, it was the traders who put Kingston back on its feet again. By 1807 the town was generally considered to be the capital of the West Indies. Its streets were wide and airy, and the wealthier citizens lived in spacious and elegant mansions. The merchants took a particular pride in their gigs and chaises. "A handsome vehicle of the latest fashion, with a spirited horse of fine figure and good action, well groomed and elegantly caparisoned seems the acme of their ambitions," wrote one visitor.

By 1835 the town had built up a substantial trade with the United States and South America. During harvest-time the wharfs were piled high with rum, sugar, ginger, coffee and pimento. The hot, sandy streets were crowded with drays hauling the bounty of the island to the quays and returning with casks of coal, barrels of herrings, salt beef, pork, butter, machinery, clothing and flour.

But, as the 19th Century wore on, Kingston began to decay. The demand for Jamaican goods fell off and in 1860 a visitor sadly wrote "It looks what it is – a place where money has been made, but can be made no more." In 1907, the town that had been born out of an earthquake, perished in one, and a new capital city rose from the ruins.

Soldiers, merchants and slaves mingle in a Kingston street (above) in 1825. The troops were based there to protect the port (below) from enemy attacks and to prevent slave uprisings.

sphere, were rather too much like highly organized factories. In the bright sunlight, the planter dreamed of the dappled English woodlands, the green shires, the thrill of the chase, London clubs and coffee-houses where he could hobnob with friends and enjoy intelligent conversation away from the potentially explosive situation of his slave-run estates.

The land usually consisted of cane-fields, provision-grounds, and woodlands. A planter liked to have at least 200 to 300 acres of his estate planted in cane, though this was not always possible in the smaller islands, where available land was limited. The provision-grounds were used by the slaves for growing root crops and vegetables for food. Woodlands were depleted for lumber, logs and firewood. Pasture was sometimes available for cattle. Each estate had its own mill and boiling-house, and on many there was a distillery for making rum. There were workshops for the wheelwrights, carpenters, coopers, blacksmiths and masons. On the more enlightened plantations there was a hospital-room for sick slaves, and on every estate a small lock-up for those who misbehaved. There were sheds for livestock and sheds where the cane-trash, *bagasse* as it was usually called, was stored for use as fuel for the sugar boilers.

Not too far from the factory buildings were the small houses occupied by managers and supervisors. These people ranged in status from the overseer, through book-keepers, who were not only accountants but supervisors of field-work, down to the comparatively skilled craftsmen and the unskilled white staff.

Set apart from the estate buildings were the slave quarters. These might be small individual huts with thatched roofs, or long barracks. The number of slaves depended, roughly, on the number of acres of cane-land to be cultivated, but a population of one adult slave per acre was generally thought sufficient.

Conditions varied greatly from island to island, but in most cases the Plantocracy and their white managers needed the security of fire-arms. Sometimes slaves revolted – there were 13 revolts in the British West Indies in the 18th Century – and were heavily suppressed, in the worst cases with the help of the nearest military garrison. In one case,

continued on p. 437

A view of English Harbour, Antigua, in 1827, shows the sheltered anchorage for which the key Caribbean naval base was justly famous.

Antigua, Linchpin of the Caribbean Defence System

Antigua, tucked away among the Leeward Islands and washed by a turquoise sea, was strategically the most important of all the British West Indies. Although the island was colonized in 1632, it took the violent hurricane of 1666 to demonstrate the value of its finest anchorage, English Harbour. While the devastating wind sank shipping and tore up trees all over the island, little more than a fresh breeze stirred the halyards of Governor Wats's yacht as it rode at anchor in the calm waters of English Harbour. Wats was so delighted with his vessel's survival that he wrote to the naval authorities in London explaining the excellence of English Harbour as an anchorage. The Admiralty thanked him for his observations and promptly forgot them.

Then, after war with France in the early 18th Century had spread to the West Indies, the British determined never again to risk the loss of the area's succulent sugar-cane on which so much of her prosperity depended. Imperial strategy demanded the presence of a fleet in the West Indies, and a fleet needed a hurricane-proof base. At first, no one at the Admiralty could think of one. Then quite suddenly some official rediscovered Governor Wats's report and in 1728 the first dockyard was built at English Harbour. So many captains clamoured to use its facilities that a larger dock was built in 1743. The anchorage quickly became the most important British naval base in the West Indies. In mid century, when Britain and France transformed the area into a major theatre of war in their struggle for world power, Antigua was the linchpin of all naval operations in the Caribbean. Most constructions on the surrounding hills consisted of forts and barracks, but in 1786 a party of English stonemasons arrived to build a house above the dockyard for the Duke of Clarence – the future William IV – who had been ordered to join Captain Nelson's squadron at English Harbour the following year. The two young officers became firm friends and the Duke gave away the bride when Nelson married Frances Nisbet, a young widow, on neighbouring Nevis in March, 1787.

Nelson was glad of any opportunity to leave English Harbour. He loathed the place – on his first visit there in 1784 he had described it as an "infernal hole." But officers attached to the base actually had a great deal to be thankful for. They were quartered in airy buildings ashore and could attend balls at Clarence House or sip iced lemonade under the palms as the mood took them. On the other hand, ordinary sailors may well have shared Nelson's opinion. They were confined to their ships in harbour. Sometimes 2,000–3,000 were crammed below decks in the sweltering humidity, inhaling the stench of their own excreta which was sluiced into the tideless water and infected hundreds with "black vomit" and various "putrid distempers."

But at English Harbour, the men were expendable: it was the ships that mattered. Warships were painstakingly careened and refitted. Practically every day in the hurricane season, men-of-war seeking safety were to be seen taking on food, water, powder and shot at the quays. Whenever battle-damaged ships limped in, teams of carpenters set to work renewing shattered masts and torn hulls and pursers hurried from building to building, drawing kit and signing for sail, paint, tar and cordage.

English Harbour bustled with activity for as long as the sailing navy ruled the seas. But towards the end of the 19th Century, the roaring forges and whirring sawpits of the naval base fell silent as steam supplanted sail and the Caribbean lost the last vestige of its former importance in the affairs of Empire. The dockyard was formally closed in 1889 and weeds soon defaced its wharfs and choked its buildings. English Harbour decayed steadily until 1961 when, restored to much of its former grandeur, it was re-opened for charter boats.

which has passed into legend, 300 rebellious slaves on the Danish island of St. John, in 1733 threw themselves over a cliff rather than surrender. Two years later, 77 slaves were burnt alive after a revolt in Antigua.

Sometimes slaves ran away. If caught, the penalties were apt to be terrible. Occasionally they escaped for good, perhaps to join the Indian coastal settlements in Central or South America or the Maroons of Jamaica.

The Maroons, runaway slaves whose settlements in the remote Cockpit area of Jamaica survive to this day, always showed a remarkable capacity for survival. The original group, which paralysed the island with its marauding activity in the years immediately following the British conquest, was Spanish-led. Later on, leadership tended to come from escaped Gold Coast slaves. These were known as the "Koromantyn" and were distinguished by their vitality, courage and stubbornness. Of the various Maroon rebellions which occurred in Jamaica during the course of the 18th Century one led by Tacky, a Koromantyn, was the most alarming. Bryan Edwards, a planter who wrote a history of the West Indies, reporting incidents in this particular outbreak, states that whites were butchered wherever found defenceless, and that the Maroons thereupon drank their blood, laced with rum.

During most of the 18th and early 19th Centuries, life in the West Indies was lived against the chaotic background of the struggle with France. As Spain declined, Britain and France wrestled for control of trade with the Spanish colonies and for territorial advantage. It was a war waged predominantly by navies, the French from their great base at Martinique, the British from stations at Kingston and Antigua.

During these campaigns, islands changed hands with startling frequency and suddenness: and tiny, forgotten specks of rock acquired a significance which justified the mounting of large expeditions. In a Caribbean footnote to the Seven Years' War the French island of Guadeloupe was taken in 1759, the year of Wolfe's victory at Quebec. Three years later, Wolfe's second in command,

The 19th-Century seal of the Turks and Caicos Islands shows a merchantman taking on supplies of raw salt on which the islands depended to store up their shaky economy.

Robert Monckton, employing many of the troops who had fought at the Heights of Abraham, took Martinique with naval support supplied by Admiral Rodney. When Spain joined France against Britain, a vast British retaliatory attack was launched against Havana, under Admiral Pocock and the Earl of Albemarle. Peace which was finally concluded in 1763 made British possessions of Grenada, St. Vincent, Dominica and the islands of Tobago.

The negotiations highlighted the importance statesmen placed on these tiny islands. There was much debate over whether England should restore Canada or Guadeloupe to France. By hindsight, the idea of comparing the two seems derisory, yet in England a violent pamphlet war raged over the issue. In the end, England retained Canada – and the French were delighted to have a rich sugar island instead of "a few acres of snow," as Voltaire called Canada.

The following year saw a miniature crisis which seems even more surrealistic to modern eyes. The cause of the dispute was Turks Island, nine square miles of coral, limestone and salt-ponds with a population of a few hundred, which held the key to the passage between Cuba and Hispaniola. The French occupied it, ostensibly to destroy pirate settlements there. The British responded with staggering ferocity: "The island must and shall be restored," the British Foreign Minister, George Grenville, told the French Ambassador, "I shall wait nine days for your answer. . . . If I do not receive it, the Fleet now lying at Spithead, shall sail directly for the West Indies to assert the rightful claims of Britain." The French came back with an extraordinary suggestion: a condominium of France, Spain and England, who were to divide the area between them – three square miles each – send equal numbers of colonists and build lighthouses in cooperation. Spain declined. Only then did France back down.

In the War of the American Revolution, and the wider conflict which followed, island after island at first fell to the French. In the end, all was redeemed by Rodney, by then a veteran of Caribbean engagements. In April, 1782, in an action fought in the Saints Passage off Dominica, he defeated the French Admiral, de Grasse, captured his flagship the *Ville de Paris*, and saved Jamaica from invasion. In fact he did far more. His success enabled Britain to make a better peace than she otherwise could have done, and although she lost her American Colonies she retained her precious islands in the West Indies, from which she drew so much revenue, direct and indirect.

(Rodney is elaborately – and inappropriately – commemorated at Spanish Town, Jamaica, as a Roman Proconsul with a laurel wreath on his head, dressed in Roman tunic and sandals.)

As a result of American independence, the citizens of that country, formerly "colonials," became "foreigners." This meant that they were subject to the Navigation Laws first introduced by Cromwell in 1651 to ensure that only British vessels carried British and colonial goods. The Americans were then forbidden to trade directly, as they had always and so profitably done in the past, with the West Indies. It was a serious blow to both parties, and Captain Horatio Nelson, during his one and only peacetime commission in the course of which he married in Nevis, made himself highly unpopular with the islanders, and indeed with his immediate superiors, by insisting on a rigid application of the restrictive laws, which had been locally ignored ❧

SLAVES, SUGAR, RUM: A RECIPE FOR WEALTH

When the first plantations of sugar-cane sprang up in Barbados in 1627, English labourers were used, but they were quickly replaced by West African slaves who were better able to endure the debilitating humidity. Subjected to appalling brutalities by their overseers, they toiled at planting cane, harvesting it and producing sugar and rum. By 1823, when these pictures of plantation life on Antigua were painted, the work had changed little, though humanitarian pressures on the absentee landlords had considerably reduced the sufferings of the slaves.

Negroes break virgin land, preparing squares which will retain manure as fertilizer for the coming crop.

Painstaking planting, frenzied harvest

On the approach of the autumn rains, gangs of negroes were marched to the fields to plant the cane. Each gang, accompanied by a negro driver with a long whip, was set to work hoeing the well-manured squares. If the roots of the previous planting had failed to send up fresh, new shoots, the old plants were dug up and replaced with cuttings from mature cane stalks. Given sufficient moisture and fierce sunshine the dormant buds on the stalk soon sprouted and – barring hurricanes, drought and disease – the crop was ready for harvesting in a little over a year's time.

Cut cane is a highly perishable commodity and as soon as field-gangs began to fell the crop it had to be rushed to the insatiable windmill where the sticky, sweet juice was squeezed out between vertical rollers.

It was at this time that the slaves were driven hardest, although the days were over when slaves who slacked at work could be dismembered, castrated or burned alive for their misdemeanours.

Slaves planting cane cuttings and hoeing squares of earth begin another day of work. They were summoned to the fields before dawn by the ringing of a bell or a blast on a conch-shell.

Long lines of slaves, under the watchful eyes of overseers, fell the ripe crop with sharp bill-hooks. Carts wait to transport the oozing cane from the fields to the windmill.

As the crusher squeezes the juice out of the bundles of cane, the mangled stalks are ejected from the mill and used to stoke fires at the boiling-house and distillery.

A tricky, unhealthy process

Fresh from the mill, the cane juice was piped into the boiling-house, where the slaves began the complex operations that produced sugar and rum. The sweltering heat of the boiling-house held its own dangers, for most of the slaves who worked in it developed dropsy – watery swellings of the face and hands. Unwary slaves were even known to fall into the huge simmering vats in which the raw juice was initially boiled and cleared of its impurities. From these vats, slaves ladled the now transparent liquid along adjoining lines of smaller vats, known as coppers, each one hotter than the last.

The juice, progressively heated and cleared of scum, thickened and was led off to cooling-trays. Here the pure sugar crystallized on the surface of the brownish viscid residue called "molasses." This sugar-encrusted mass was tipped into perforated barrels so that the molasses might drain off, to be mixed later with scum and water, fermented, and distilled to make rum, end-product of the process.

Slaves ladle steaming juice from vat to vat and clear it of the scum which is carried away in a brick channel. A gutter leads the boiling liquid into cooling-trays beneath the open windows.

The sugar-making completed, slaves set to work producing rum at the distillery. Among other tasks, they keep the fires under the stills well stoked and remove barrels of liquor.

Inside the distillery, skilled slaves sample the spirit to see if it is strong enough: spirit under 25 per cent proof was redistilled.

Barrels of sugar and rum, brought in carts from the remote plantations to the nearest beach, are rolled into dinghies and rowed out to lighters moored in the shallow water. These small boats took their cargoes round the coast to the island's two ports, where deep-draught merchantmen awaited them. There, the barrels were stowed for the last leg of their journey to England, where the agents of the plantation-owners sold the contents.

III. Decline and Fall

By the end of the long war with Revolutionary and Napoleonic France in 1815 the palmiest days of the West Indian Plantocracy were drawing to a close. Sugar prices were uncertain and the French, who produced their crops more economically, were soon to gain the lion's share of the European market.

In the eyes of the planters, the most threatening development was the campaign, long continued in England, for the abolition of the slave-trade, fiercely opposed by the West India Society. As it was never tired of proclaiming, this body had the sacred principle of property on its side. But it was defending a vested interest, not, like the anti-slavers, conducting a crusade. The crusade for abolition was carried forward with such zeal, concentration and moral fervour that it battered down opposition stage by stage. Slavery itself was abolished in August, 1834, and the planters received £20,000,000 in compensation for the loss of their unpaid labour. The old-style West Indian estate began to disappear, although the introduction of an "apprenticeship" system, in reality little more than part-time slavery, did much to maintain the *status quo*. The legislators were as considerate to the planters as they could be but very few planters saw their attitude in this light.

Baptist missionary William Knibb fought tenaciously to end slavery in Jamaica. When complete emancipation came in 1838, he declared ecstatically: "The monster is dead."

Resistance from the Plantocracy to the idea of total emancipation was as fierce as it had been towards the suppression of the slave-trade. Missionaries, mostly Nonconformist, who preached in favour were given short shrift. One Wesleyan in Barbados was driven from the island after his church and home had been destroyed. Another victim, one John Smith of Jamaica, wrote in his diary: "my very heart flutters at hearing the almost incessant cracking of the whip." One morning, he counted 149 strokes as an unfortunate was lashed by one of the sadists in charge of field-labour gangs. In Jamaica an organization called the "Colonial Church Union," whose object was the persecution of such people as Smith, burnt 16 of their churches, before it was declared illegal by the Governor, Lord Mulgrave.

Since they were forbidden to import slaves, the planters tried to breed them reviving an idea which had been attempted in the 18th Century by the Codringtons. The movement involved some measure of amelioration in slave conditions until the "apprenticeship" system was abandoned and complete emancipation was conceded in 1838.

The immediate effects of emancipation were to depress land prices so that there was much truth behind the planters' anguished cry that they were "ruined," and to divert labour from sugar production, which was in any event threatened by competition from, for example, near-by Cuba and distant Mauritius. There was a reversion to indentured labour – this time from India – as a source of labour for the sugar plantations. From 1838 until the end of the century, over 300,000 Indians arrived, a new wave of emigration that ended only in 1924. But, for the British at least, the hey-day of sugar was over: the methods, relying still on windmills and indentured labour, were firmly entrenched in the 18th Century and no one apparently took any notice of Cuba's steam-driven factories which were ten times more productive and considerably more profitable.

There was a reversion to the smaller holding, a movement begun by negroes who had either been released from slavery or won their freedom by purchase before emancipation, and who had saved enough money to buy a little property. The idea spread, and as the owners of many large estates were willing enough sellers, considerable changes took place in the economy. By the mid 19th Century, every pimento plantation in Jamaica except one was owned and worked by black proprietors, who were turning more and more to growing coffee. They were also beginning to invest their savings in property in the towns.

The naval dockyard at Ireland Island, Bermuda,

Fear reigned in most islands both before and after emancipation: fear of slave rebellion before the act; after it, fear of increasing control of island administration in the interests of the coloured population. In 1862 occurred a tragic example of bloodshed and repression which resulted from one of the most controversial appointments ever made – that of sending Edward John Eyre to govern the colony of Jamaica.

replenished Caribbean-bound warships in the 1860s. But they called less and less as the West Indies relapsed into stagnation and decay.

Governor Edward Eyre was a man of courage and determination. When young, he had made journeys of almost unbelievable hardship across part of unknown Australia. His later experience had included high posts in New Zealand and in the Leeward Islands and he had consistently shown sympathy with the under-dog. But when he went to Jamaica as Acting Governor in 1862 he was at once appalled by the poverty and disorder in the island, and was shocked at what he saw as the laziness and lack of morals in the people of all classes.

Hardship, which had been increasing since emancipation, had in fact been made still worse by the rise in prices of foodstuffs due to the American Civil War. This monumental struggle together with the realization that "black" republics had been established in Haiti in 1838 and in San Domingo in 1844, led to a situation which could become explosive at any moment. The negroes hated the whites, whom they outnumbered 27 to one and all that was necessary was effective agitation. This was soon supplied.

One particularly active negro, a magistrate and a member of the Legislative Assembly, was William George Gordon. He annoyed Eyre excessively by complaining about conditions under which people at St. Thomas awaited trial, and the Governor deprived him of his magistracy. When rioting broke out in October, 1865, after a number of negroes had prevented the capture of a known criminal, Eyre at once suspected Gordon of being at the back of the disorder, for Gordon had made no secret of his opposition to almost every official action taken by the Governor since his arrival.

Trouble came quickly. On October 11 the Court House at Morant Bay was burnt, and in the fighting customs officers, militiamen and many more insurgents were killed or wounded. Property was destroyed, and outrages were committed against white people. With their memories of slave rebellions, war against the Maroons, apprehensive white people felt that a very strong hand indeed was needed. Eyre supplied it.

The Governor at once mobilized army, navy, European civilians, and loyal negroes, and between October 13 and November 13 he imposed martial law at Morant Bay. This did not apply at Kingston, where Gordon was at the time of the outbreak, but Eyre had him arrested anyway, brought to St. Thomas in a ship of war, tried, and executed. It was a very high-handed act, and it was followed by repression of the harshest kind. Over 600 negroes died, an equal number were flogged, including some women, and a thousand dwellings were destroyed by the combined forces of the Establishment – and this 30 years after emancipation.

Gratitude to Eyre on the part of the whites was so overwhelming that the Legislative Assembly actually voted itself out of existence, so thankfully did it regard the prospect of Jamaica becoming a Crown Colony, at any rate temporarily.

But liberal feeling in England was outraged by the severities which Eyre had sanctioned, and a Royal Commission was sent to Jamaica to investigate matters. It sat from January to March, 1866, and then reported. The upshot was that the government of the day thanked Eyre for his prompt measures, blamed him for excess in reprisals, and recalled him. He lived for another 30 years but never had another official posting. He became the centre of controversy, and the subject of a certain amount of persecution. There is no doubt that Eyre acted precipitately, not to say vindictively in the case of Gordon; it was on this fact that charges against him mainly rested.

The American Civil War, which brought hardship to the poorer people in the West Indies generally, brought an unexpected bonus to one particular locality. Nassau, in the Bahamas, became one of the main supply-stations for ships running the Federal blockade of such ports as Wilmington and Charleston to carry war materials to the Confederacy. Merchants and planters enjoyed a brief period of prosperity which would not be exceeded until, nearly a century later, the island group became a leading centre in the tourist industry.

After the excitement and terror of the troubles in Jamaica, the West Indies as a whole continued in that declining state which seemed to be their destiny in an era of free trade. No longer were they regarded as jewels in the imperial crown, the scene of rich harvests, the source of immense fortunes. No longer were the seasonal convoys awaited with keen speculation by the gentlemen of the City of London. And as the day of the cruise liner was still a long way off, if and when the islands were visited, it was their "quaintness" which was most often remarked upon by travellers.

Sustained efforts, of varying success, were made in the way of economic help by the home government, and the fortunes of the islands were almost as different as their size. St. Kitts, with its splendidly fertile soil, continued to be among the more attractive settings, as did once flourishing Barbados.

By the mid 20th Century the Caribbean story has in a strange way come full circle. The Jacobean pioneers saw in these islands in the sun the possibility of wealth, the certainty of adventure. Such a role would have seemed strange to the millions of slaves, and poorer whites, who had once made possible an era of crop-based prosperity. But the Plantocracy would have understood, for they themselves had been able to enjoy the rich good life – a life which has been re-created today for the fortunate tourists who can afford to take their holidays in the sunlit isles of the West Indies.

St. George's, Grenada, like most West Indian ports, presented a tranquil scene in the 1850s after the hey-day of Caribbean trade was over.

ORDER NOW

Once you had to be rich to drink from goblets like these!

Now this pair can be yours for only £1.95.

You'd have to pay around £4·25 in the shops for a pair of goblets of this quality. As a regular reader of *The British Empire*, you can own them for under half price—only £1·95 and 4 purple tokens. That's a saving of £2·30.

Shaped and polished by hand

Each goblet is handmade from an exclusive design. First the bowl is shaped in strong, smooth nickel silver. The solid brass stem is then added, and the complete goblet hard-plated with silver. Finally it is polished to gleaming perfection, again by hand.

Years of pleasure

People who could afford them have drunk from silver vessels for centuries. One advantage is that, unlike precious crystal glasses, these goblets will never get chipped or cracked. Being silver-plated to the highest standards of quality, they will give you pleasure for years, both in use and on display in your home.

Limited Supply

Each goblet, approximately 4¼″ tall, is a full sherry glass size. Only 750 pairs are available.

At the incredibly low price of £1·95 a pair, the demand is expected to be far greater than the supply. As a result, it is necessary to limit orders to 2 pairs per order.

So don't delay – complete the order form below and post it right away. Orders must be received by 22nd June, 1972.

How the token scheme works

Each week, there are two tokens on the inside front cover of *The British Empire*. This week, there's the second gold tankard token and the fourth purple goblets token. Each week, you should collect these tokens to take advantage of the exciting offers that are on their way. And every week, as you collect towards the current offer, you'll be getting a start towards the next.

Note:

If you miss a token, your newsagent will be able to order the appropriate back number of *The British Empire* for you.

All offers applicable to the British Isles only.

Enjoy your 'imperial pint' from this burnished pewter tankard.

Only £3.30–save £1.95.

Pewter drinking vessels have a long and ancient history. They may even have originated in Britain – in Roman times – since supplies of tin and lead were plentiful.

The earliest surviving English pewter tankards date from about 1650. Like that offered here, they have flat lids, though whether for hygiene, security or simply to make more work for the influential guild of craftsmen is not really known.

Traditional Design

Lids became less popular after about 1690, and went out of use altogether about 1830. By this time the original tin and lead mixture from which pewter had for centuries been made had been replaced by an alloy of tin and antimony.

The pewter tankard offered to you here combines the best of both worlds. Its traditional design is based on 17th century

lidded tankards, while the metal is a completely lead-free alloy.

Monogrammed

The tankard holds an imperial pint, and stands over 6″ high. It is offered at the advantageous price of only £3·30, instead of £5·25 (manufacturer's recommended retail price), a saving of £1·95. For an additional 50p any two initials of your choice may be scroll engraved, as illustrated.

A 'pint' could never taste better than it does from this handsome handmade tankard, with its silky smooth, burnished finish. Imagine it displayed in your home, or the pleasure with which it would be received as a gift or trophy.

To order your imperial pint tankard, you'll need four gold tokens from *The British Empire*. The second token appears this week.

To: Goblets Offer, 17 Thame Park Road, Thame, Oxon.
Please send me a pair of goblets. I enclose four purple tokens and a cheque or postal order for £1·95 (made payable to Time-Life International).

Name .....
BLOCK LETTERS PLEASE

Full postal address .....

Royal Marines Ensign, 1830